

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

CU-02 /061 W

----- 107876

R 111136Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 692

S E C R E T BANGKOK 2434

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, TH

SUBJ: ALLEGED ISOC ATROCITIES

REF : BANGKOK 2298

1. BANGKOK NEWSPAPERS ARE AGAIN RUNNING SENSATIONAL ARTICLES ALLEGING PAST ATROCITIES AND MASSACRES OF VILLAGERS IN KUAN KANOON, MUANG, KAO CHAISON AND PAK PHAYUN DISTRICTS OF PATTALUNG PROVINCE IN THE SOUTH. (FOR AN EXAMPLE, SEE THE BANGKOK POST OF 2/7/75) THE NATIONAL STUDENTS CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT) CHARGES CSOC (NOW ISOC) OR CSOC MEMBERS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR MASS ASSASSINATIONS AND TORTURE OF VILLAGERS. NSCT CLAIMS THEY ARE INVESTIGATING AND THAT THEIR INFORMATION COMES FROM RELATIVES, HEADMEN AND PERSONS WHO WERE ARRESTED AT THE TIME AND WHO NOW CLAIM THE VICTIMS WERE INNOCENT OF BEING CT.

2. THESE CHARGES REFER TO A PERIOD ROUGHLY 1969-1971 WHEN THERE WAS AN INTENSE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN COMMUNIST TERRORISTS AND THE RTG. THE TERRORISTS HAD BECOME INCREASINGLY BOLD IN THE USE OF MURDER AS A WEAPON OF INTIMIDATION. LOCAL POLICE REACTION WAS SEVERE AND SOON ARTICLES IN BANGKOK NEWSPAPERS APPEARED DRAMATIZING THE CONFRONTATION.

3. IN LATE 1971, AS A RESULT OF THESE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES, MACT/JUSMACT SENT AN OFFICER ALONG WITH MAJOR GENERAL

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PHAT DECHA (NOW RETIRED) TO INTERVIEW MAJOR GENERAL SANT

CHITPATIMA, COMMANDER GENERAL 5TH MILITARY CIRCLE AND THE COSOC REGION COMMANDER. MR. MACK TANNER, THEN CONSUL AT SONGKHLA, SAT IN ON THE INTERVIEW.

SANT AT THAT TIME ACKNOWLEDGED THAT INCIDENTS HAD OCCURRED BUT DENIED THAT THEY WERE ORDERED OR CONDONED BY HIM OR BY CSOC. HE ALLEGED THAT THE ACTIONS WERE SPONTANEOUSLY AND LOCALLY INSTIGATED. VILLAGERS HAD COME TO THE LOCAL POLICE STATING THAT KNOWN CT IN THEIR VILLAGES HAD THREATENED TO KILL THEM IF THEY COOPERATED WITH THE POLICE AND CIVIL AUTHORITIES. THEY REFUSED FURTHER COOPERATION UNLESS STRONG ACTION WAS TAKEN. APPARENTLY LOCAL POLICE AND CIVIL AUTHORITIES WERE LED BY THE VILLAGERS TO THE HOMES OF PERSONS IDENTIFIED AS CT. THESE WERE ARRESTED AND SUMMARILY EXECUTED WITH THE VILLAGERS THEMSELVES PARTICIPATING IN "LARGE NUMBERS".

4. AS A RESULT OF THE PUBLICITY, SANT HAD BEEN ORDERED BY THE THEN RULING MILITARY GROUP AND CSOC TO INVESTIGATE AND "CLEAN UP" THE SITUATION. PART OF THE CLEAN-UP MEASURES INCLUDED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PROVINCE LISTS OF KNOWN CT. COMMITTEES OF FIVE TO SEVEN MEN HAD TO AGREE UNANIMOUSLY BEFORE A NAME COULD BE ADDED TO THE LIST OF IDENTIFIED CT.

5. ISOC IS NOT KNOWN AS YET TO HAVE MADE OFFICIAL RESPONSE TO THE RECENT NSCT CHARGES. UNOFFICIALLY THE POSITION APPEARS TO BE THAT THE INCIDENTS WERE NEITHER ORDERED OF CONDONED BY CSOC AT THE TIME. FURTHER, WHEN THEY BECAME KNOWN CSOC ORDERED THEM STOPPED, INVESTIGATED AND THE SITUATION WAS BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL.

6. COMMENT: THERE HAS LONG BEEN AN UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THAI OFFICIALS, CIVIL, POLICE AND MILITARY, AND US COUNTERPARTS THAT THE HANDLING OF LISTS OF SUSPECTED TERRORISTS OF WHATEVER ORIGIN (SIMPLE BANDIT, MALAYSIAN, CHINESE, SEPARATIST OR COMMUNIST) IS A CONCERN STRICTLY OF THE RTG OFFICIALS INVOLVED. IT HAS BEEN CLEAR TO US THAT ISOC HAS GENERALLY STOOD FOR AN EMPHASIS ON GOOD LOCAL ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS AT THE VILLAGE LEVEL RATHER THAN ON SUPPRESSION, AS THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS OF CONTROLLING

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THE COMMUNIST INSURGENCY. NONETHELESS, THE PREVALENCE OF PRESS ARTICLES ATTACKING ISOC FOR THE KIND OF ACTION IT HAS DEPLORED MAKES THE PROBLEM OF POPULARIZING THE NEW AW PAW PAW PROGRAM (REFTEL, AND GAINING ACCEPTANCE FOR IT FROM THE INCOMING GOVERNMENT, THAT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT.

KINTNER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TERRORISTS, ATROCITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGKO02434
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750049-0653
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750255/aaaabxga.tel
Line Count: 113
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BANGKOK 2298
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 JUL 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <20 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALLEGED ISOC ATROCITIES
TAGS: PINS, TH, ISOC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006